



Pilgrims Newsletter

Aylesford

Autumn 2018

Dear friend

It has been a busy summer here at Aylesford. One of the events that will stay with me is the flower show arranged by the West Kent W.I. marking their centenary. There were many beautiful displays but the one of the poppies stood out for me. I would like to share it with you. In a short time we will be commemorating the end of the First World War. I know some of you have relatives that you wish to remember who died during this war or other conflicts. The poppy is a powerful symbol of remembrance made more relevant as many of the poppies that people wear are made in Aylesford in the nearby British Legion Village.

Rejoice and be Glad

Earlier this year Pope Francis published an Apostolic Exhortation called 'Gaudete et Exsultate' – Rejoice and be Glad - a call to holiness in today's world. Pope Francis reflects upon the Beatitudes and finding holiness through being merciful and charitable. One example he gives is of a mother who after a long and tiring day listens to the needs and concerns of her children. I would like to share one of the final paragraphs about Mary with you. "I would like these reflections to be crowned by Mary, because she lived the Beatitudes of Jesus as none other. She is that woman who rejoiced in the presence of God, who treasured everything in her heart, and who let herself be pierced by the sword. Mary is the saint among the saints, blessed above all others. She teaches us the way of holiness and she walks ever at our side. She does not let us remain fallen and at times she takes us into her arms without judging us. Our converse with her consoles, frees and sanctifies us. Mary our Mother does not need a flood of words. She does not need us to tell her what is happening in our lives. All we need to do is whisper, time and time again: 'Hail Mary...'"



A stunning arrangement by the Hartley WI



The two Teresas, sculpted by Philip Lindsey Clark

The Prayer of St. Teresa and St. Thérèse

Every year In October the Church and the Carmelite family celebrate two great women, namely St. Teresa of Jesus (Avila) and St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus (Lisieux) and we have novenas for both women with this newsletter. Often people ask about prayer. These two great women have much to say to us on this subject.

St. Teresa of Jesus is called by some as 'the Doctor of Prayer'. She writes of having a friendship with Jesus. Her teachings on prayer are firmly rooted upon **the Word of God and of friendship with Jesus.** In her 'The Book of Life' we read, "I trust then in the mercy of God, who never fails to repay anyone who has taken Him for a friend" [8:5]. Later in the same chapter she writes, "Oh, what a good friend You make, my Lord!" [8:6].

The spirituality of St. Thérèse was firmly rooted upon the Gospel. She frequently wrote of the love and mercy of God. She prayed for her family and friends, for missionaries and for convicted murderers. For her no one was beyond the love and mercy of God. For her prayer unites her to Jesus. In her own words she wrote,



Summer Fayre

The summer Fayre was a great success—good weather, good food, good entertainment and raised much needed funds for the priory. The Grand Draw winners were:

1st Prize	Sisters of Christ, Sittingbourne
2nd Prize	S. McGrath, London
3rd Prize	L. Lloyd, Medway

We are now planning the Christmas Fayre which will be on 24-25 November and therefore you will find our Christmas Draw tickets in with this newsletter. Do return them if you can. We hope to see you at the Christmas Fayre.



“For me, prayer is an aspiration of the heart, it is a simple glance directed to heaven, it is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy; finally, it is something great, supernatural, which expands my soul and unites me to Jesus.” [Story of the Soul: p242]

The Samaritan Woman

For all Carmelites the scriptures are important. In our Rule a Carmelite is instructed **“to stay in his own cell or nearby, pondering the Lord’s law day and night and keeping watch at his prayers” [Rule of St. Albert Ch8].** Both St. Teresa and St. Thérèse reflected upon the Word of God. One of the passages that was important to both of them was the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4: 1-42). Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at a well, who is estranged from her own community as she has been married five times. He asks her for some water and thus begins one of the longest conversations that Jesus had in the Gospels. He speaks of the gift of **‘Living Water’** which is himself. She believes in him and later brings others to Jesus as well. St. Teresa in her **‘Book of Life’** wrote, *“Oh, how many times do I recall the living water that the Lord told the Samaritan woman about! And so I am very fond of that gospel passage. Thus it is indeed, that from the time I was a little child, without understanding this good as I do now, I often begged the Lord to give me the water...”* (Life30: 19).

While St. Thérèse in her autobiography (translated by Ronald Knox) refers to this passage twice. She writes, *“...my longing to save souls grew from day to day: it was as if I heard our Lord saying to me what he said to the Samaritan: ‘Give me some water to drink.’ Lovers are fond of exchanging presents. On my side, I offered to our Lord souls that were revived, now, by the dew of his precious blood...”* (Story of a Soul: p130)

Later the saint writes, *“The same God who tells us that He has no need of us when he is hungry wasn’t ashamed to beg for a drop of water from the Samaritan woman – but then, He was thirsty, and thirsty for what? It was the love of this one despised creature that the Maker of heaven and earth asked for, when He said: ‘Give me some to drink’ He was thirsty for love.”* (Story of a Soul: p229)

We hear this Gospel passage on the Third Sunday of Lent in year A. The water mentioned in the Gospel is a reminder of our baptism and of the new life that it offers. However, these two great Carmelite women saw much more to this scripture passage. They saw the love and compassion that Jesus showed to the Samaritan woman. She was an alienated woman from a despised community, but she was welcomed by Jesus, and she became his disciple. Water is a

Forthcoming Retreats & Pilgrimages

Thérèse—The Little Way Retreat 28-30 September

“Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word: always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love.” During this weekend we look at how we can live our lives in the spirit of Thérèse.
Cost: £173 single, £168 senior citizen, £156 shared. Day fee £15

Little Flower Society St Thérèse Pilgrimage 30 September

12 noon Gathering Service & Blessing of prayer banner, 2.15pm Blessing of Roses, 3pm Mass. Exhibition of Mission’s work.

All-Filipino Pilgrimage 7 October

Shared picnic. 1.30pm Rosary procession, 2.30pm Mass.

Grief in Loss, Hope in Christ 12-14 October

This retreat is for anyone who has experienced a bereavement, whether recently or some time ago. We grieve, remember, hope and give thanks for our loved ones in the light of the Resurrection of Jesus.
Cost: £173 single, £168 senior citizen, £156 shared.

The Mindful Path to Christ Part 2 Day Retreat 20 October

We deepen our dialogue with the non-Christian traditions by looking at the contemplative writing of Thomas Merton and explore how the work of contemporary Carmelites in India have opened up new avenues of dialogue in this ‘path of peace’.

Encouraging Spiritual Growth Day Retreat 3 November

How can we develop our life of prayer?

Advent Retreat 7-9 December

A weekend starting with a joint ecumenical service, exploring how the coming of God into our world gives us hope, enabling us to deepen our relationship with God
Cost: £173 single, £168 senior citizen, £156 shared. Day fee £15

Further information available on our website

powerful symbol as it is so essential for life. Jesus speaks of himself as the 'Living Water'. This is the water of eternal life which St. Teresa was so hungry for, while St. Thérèse saw it as a gift that is given out of love from God.

Jesus treats the Samaritan woman with great respect and dignity. She has a gradual conversion; at first she recognised Jesus as prophet and then she becomes the first person, in John's Gospel, to identify Jesus as the Messiah. For our two great Carmelite women Jesus treats the Samaritan woman with compassion and respect. Jesus will show us the same mercy and love.

November – prayers for the Holy Souls

November is not far away, when we pray for our deceased loved ones. It is the tradition of the church to pray for the dead, especially during the month of November. The days are short and the nights are long. Due to our bereavements we may feel we are living in darkness but with eyes of faith we know the light of the Resurrection is near.

I find some of the Eucharistic Prayers helpful. In the Second Prayer for Reconciliation we pray: "...with our brothers and sisters and those of every race and tongue who have died in your friendship. Bring us to share with them the unending banquet of unity in a new heaven and a new earth, where the fullness of your peace will shine forth in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In the Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs III we pray: "Remember our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the peace of your Christ, and the dead, whose faith you alone have known. Admit them to rejoice in the light of your face, and in the resurrection give them the fullness of life."

In this modern age of communication where events from the other side of the world become instant news, we are sometimes quick to condemn others. However, at the end of time we are judged by a God who knows us in a way that no one else does.

News

It has been our tradition in Aylesford to gather with our fellow Christians for Pentecost. The last few years this has taken the form of Evening Prayer on the Vigil of this great feast. This year it took place here at The Friars. Our choir were joined by the choir of St. Peter's Aylesford. The Solemn Evening Prayer was presided by Michael Cox with Kevin Alban preaching. We were also joined by two students from Allen

Hall, Chelsea, who both served. We are sad that the Vicar of Aylesford, Rev Jonathan Hall is leaving after two years.

In May we heard of the death of Sr. Bernadette Crook RSHM, who worked in the pottery in the late 1980's. She was a Marymount Sister and was for a while superior of their community in Kingston Hill. She was a gifted artist and taught Icon painting. She died in Brazil giving an Icon course to novices of her Order.

The Summer Fayre was a happy family day. It was intensely hot but so many people braved the weather. The whole community were out meeting our many visitors. One of the attractions was 'guess the name of the friar bear'. It was named Crispin after a local Kentish saint.

All the regular pilgrimages have taken place: Legion of Mary, the Altar Servers, The Knights of St. Columba, UCM, the Italians, Portuguese, Nigerians and Caribbeans. We had the first



Bro Richard leading the Our Lady of Mount Carmel pilgrimage procession

Scenes from the Priory



Fr Michael presiding at the Ecumenical Vigil of Prayer for Pentecost



Work on St Joseph's chapel roof is progressing well



The Carmelite community at the Summer Fayre



Bishop Paul wearing the new blue vestments

National Syro-Malabar Pilgrimage with the Eparchy of Britain, Msgr Joseph Strampickal. They were joined by our local Bishop, Rt. Rev Paul Mason. The Knights of St. Columba Pilgrimage was led by Archbishop Peter Smith. At the end of the Mass he blessed the newly restored ceramics of the angels on the Main Shrine. The restoration was undertaken by our potters, Billy Byles and Alan Parrish.

We were joined during the summer by our student, Bro Richard Green, who has been studying philosophy in Rome. He welcomed the many schools that came here during the summer term.

It was good seeing more of the Third Order joining us for our celebration of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. As well as the Aylesford Third Order there were also Third Order members from Leigh-on-Sea, Brighton, the East Kent Spirituality Group and Carmel in the City, London. At the Mass, presided by Fr. Kevin Alban, Provincial of the Carmelites in Britain, there was one profession and two receptions in the Third Order. In the afternoon there was a talk on Carmelite Spirituality given by Fr. Michael Cox, the chaplain to the Third Order. We were joined also by other members of the Carmelite Family.

We had our first All Night Vigil for a few years in July. It was very much appreciated by those who came. I was amazed how far some people had travelled, many by public transport. Hopefully we will have another next year. The shrine at night has a unique beauty.

The following month saw the Assumption which is the titular feast of the original medieval church. It is our tradition to celebrate this great feast on the nearest Sunday. The Society of Our Lady of Lourdes, who offers hospitality to so many sick people in Lourdes, came that day. We were pleased to welcome this year Archbishop Edward Adams, the Apostolic Nuncio of Britain. During the Mass there was the Sacrament of the Sick. For me this is the day Lourdes comes to Aylesford.

Our gardening volunteers keep the gardens looking splendid. As well as the Peace Garden they give our Estates Manger, Steve Hayden, much support keeping the gardens tidy and respectable. Some of the volunteers have been repointing the paving stones along the Rosary Way. Recently, after a number of months of hard work, they have completed the repointing in front of the Scapular Vision Shrine.

We are sad to hear that our local Bishop, Rt. Rev. Paul Mason, is leaving the Diocese to become the new bishop of the Forces. He has been an Auxiliary Bishop in Southwark with pastoral responsibility for Kent since May 2016. He was a frequent visitor to Aylesford and gave the community much support.

If you have visited the shrine recently you will have seen scaffolding towers around the shrine. Work on the drainage and **soakaways is well advanced and the roofers have begun reroofing St Joseph's Chapel** Hopefully in the autumn they will have moved on to the sacristy roof and the other chapels. Thank you to those who have been so generous. We need to raise £350,000 just for this stage of the restoration of the Shrine. If you are able to make a contribution small or large it will be very much appreciated. I hope the shrine will always be a place of welcome where so many people find comfort and peace.

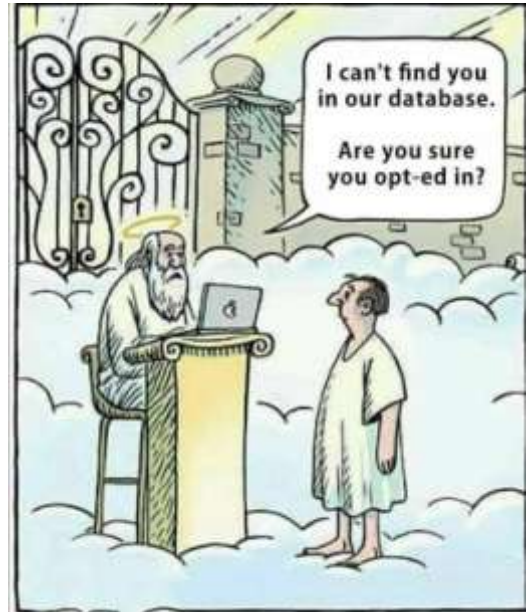
Please be assured of the daily prayers of the community for you all. God bless you, your families and everyone you love.

Francis Kemley, O.Carm.

Prior

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